

Chapter 6



Design Guidelines

The Highland Redevelopment District has established several goals for its redevelopment. One of these goals is to preserve and enhance existing structures and maintain the historical sense of place. Another goal is to strive to bring quality buildings and sites into the district. To meet these goals, the Plan recommends adoption of several performance and design guidelines in order to achieve the desired goals. The following guidelines, therefore, support a set of objectives aimed to:

- Preserve and protect the small-town, unique character and appearance of Downtown Highland.
- Create an architectural identity for the District and promote appropriate exterior design and appearance.
- Promote the orderly and harmonious growth of the District, and to enhance land values and investments.
- Complement the existing unique style architecture.
- Enhance the pedestrian orientation of the District.
- Communicate the community's vision for the District.

The guidelines should be incorporated in the overall plan for the District. It is also recommended that a Special Planning District be established in which the recommended guidelines will be incorporated in regulating future developments, rehabilitations of building, or site improvements. The Town is also encouraged to develop a set of standards and adopt these standards as requirements for all future development and rehabilitation in the District. The Standards should be developed in accordance with the design guidelines proposed in this section.

Building Mass

Objective: A consistent building height with appropriate context within the district contributes to a cohesive visual environment for the area.

Guidelines: All proposed structures should be a minimum of two stories with preferences given to three story structures when retail space is proposed on the ground floor.

Buildings with additional set back may have a higher number of floors. In such cases, a ratio of 1:3 between the building height and the set back is desirable.

Buildings should be designed to provide view corridors and public access to the riverfront, plazas and other open spaces and to avoid the creation of impenetrable walls that block movement and sight.



Examples of approved building massings

Building Height

Objective: New development and redevelopment should maintain and complement the existing pattern of building heights and elevation.

Guidelines: Buildings in the Redevelopment District may not exceed four stories and 45 feet in height.



Maximum building height of 4-stories

Building Width

Objective: To break up the monotonous appearance of long facades for new construction.

Guidelines: Buildings with longer than fifty feet of street facades should be encouraged to break up the facade by articulation of the building facade or other architectural treatments.



Different facades break up a large building mass

Building Setbacks

Objective: Buildings in the District should create a “wall” of buildings in order to reinforce the traditional “Downtown” character.

Guidelines: New construction and infill buildings must maintain the alignment of facades along the sidewalk edge. Exceptions may be granted if the setback is pedestrian-oriented and contributes to the quality and character of the streetscape.

The site shall be planned to accomplish a desirable transition with the streetscape and to provide for adequate planting, pedestrian movement and parking areas.

Direct, articulated pedestrian access should be provided from the street to the building’s primary entrance.



Buildings shall have a consistent setback

Roofs and Parapets

Objective: Roof lines in the Downtown subdistrict should maintain and compliment the rhythm of the existing buildings.

Guidelines: Flat roofs (slightly sloped to drain) are preferred with parapets that articulate the rhythm of the buildings.

Parapets should be embellished with brick detailing and stepped or sloped to achieve a visually interesting, yet harmonious sequence along the building façade.

Use of shingles and sloped hip roofs should be discouraged, except for residential and mixed use buildings in multi-story structures where a sloped roof helps to reduce the height and defines the residential character.



Example of brick detailing

Windows, Doors (Fenestration)

Objective: To encourage open views into the commercial space and enhancing the pedestrian experience by providing a visual connection to the use inside the building.

Guidelines: All retail uses shall have a primary entrance on the first floor.

In the restoration or renovation of storefronts in the Downtown, the owners should attempt to return the façade to its original character.

Preserve original materials or details and the shape and size of original window openings. Replace missing original elements such as transom windows to the extent possible.

On upper floors, the windows should be vertically oriented. Arched tops, columns framing the windows, and decorative lintels should be encouraged.

At entrances the primary materials should be used in a way that highlights the entrance.

The rear entrance should be clean and well maintained. A small sign, awnings, display windows, and planter boxes can improve the appearance.

In new construction, the ground floor façade and sides of the buildings adjacent to public right of ways or plazas should be transparent (windows and doors) for at least 30% of the facade. The use of reflective or highly tinted glass should not be allowed.



Windows, with arched tops & decorative lintels, are encouraged.



The ground floor should be transparent to the public right of way or plaza.

Materials and Detailing

Objective: Rehabilitation or redevelopment projects should be constructed to use materials and detailing that maintain the distinct character of the District.

Guidelines: A high level of design and architectural detailing should be the primary objective in the design of the buildings. New developments should be in harmony with the existing architectural style of the District, with compatible materials to the extent possible.

Traditional materials including brick, stone and stucco should be used as the primary building materials. Tile, stone, glass block, copper flashing, metal and wood should be considered for accent materials.

Infill construction should reflect some of the detailing of the surrounding buildings in window shape, cornice lines and brick work, and height of the structures in the Downtown sub-district.

Building renovation and alterations should restore architectural details of cornices, brickwork, transom, display windows and bulkheads.



Traditional building materials should be used as primary building materials.



Infill construction and renovation should reflect the same detailing and styles of buildings in the Downtown subdistrict.

Color

Objective: To encourage a complimentary use of color while maintaining variety and diversity.

Guidelines: The color of buildings should complement the adjacent buildings' colors particularly in the Downtown area. The color of brick or other natural building materials should dictate the color family choice.

Buildings should use primarily earth tones with light and bright colors used only as accents. The accent colors should complement the primary color.

The primary building color shall be earthtones.

Franchise Developments

Objective: To maintain the unique character of District, buildings should not be branded using an architectural style of a company.

Guidelines: Franchise architecture (building design that is trademarked or identified with a particular chain or corporation and is generic in nature) should not be allowed in Downtown area.

National or local chains must be encouraged to use approved standards to create unique buildings that are compatible with the District's desired architecture.



Chain stores must be encouraged to use approved standards to create unique buildings that are compatible with the rest of the district.

Awning

Objective: To enhance the historic feel of Downtown while providing sun protection for display windows, shelter for pedestrians, and a sign panel for businesses.

Guidelines: Retractable or operable awnings should be encouraged on the ground floor of the buildings. Long expanses of awning should be broken into segments that reflect the door or window openings beneath them. The use of awning should be limited to the Downtown area and where retail or service related businesses are in operation on the first floor.



Awnings shall be encouraged on the ground floor of the buildings.

Signs

Objective: Signs should be architecturally compatible with the style, composition, materials, colors and details of the building and with other signs on nearby buildings, while providing for adequate identification of the business.

Guidelines: Appropriately-sized projecting signs should be encouraged throughout the District. Symbolic and historic three-dimensional signs such as barber shop poles are recommended for the Downtown area.

Pylon and monument signage must be discouraged, particularly in the Downtown area. Signage in the District must have the capability of being lit in the evening, although the source of light must not be visible to motorists or pedestrians.



Examples of three-dimensional signage

Wall signs shall be part of the architectural concept. Size, color, lettering, location, and arrangement shall be harmonious with the building design, and shall be compatible with signs on adjoining buildings.

Projecting signs should be limited in size to not greater than 12 square feet, particularly in the Downtown subdistrict area. The clearance must be at least ten feet, and the sign should not extend beyond the first floor of the building.

Signs constructed of natural materials such as metal or wood are preferred. Permanently painted window signage is encouraged if compatible with the architecture of the building.

Neon signs can be permitted on the exterior of the building and in display windows. However the window coverage should be limited to not more than one-third of the window surface area.

Colors shall be used harmoniously and with restraint. Excessive brightness and brilliant colors shall be avoided.

Ground signs must utilize materials and colors in the sign or in the base of the sign that complement the associated building.



Example of approved building signage



Example of approved ground signage

Lighting

Objective: Lighting in the District should serve to illuminate and enhance façades, entrances, and signage. Lighting should also improve the level of safety while enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the buildings.

Guidelines: Use of excessively bright lights, flashing lights, and brilliant colors should be prevented in order to achieve continuity in building lighting within the District.

Building and signage lighting must be indirect, with the light source(s) hidden from direct pedestrian view.



Example of approved lighting

Utility and Mechanical Equipments

Objective: Utility areas and mechanical equipments should be designed and screened so that they do not detract from the aesthetic appeal of the District.

Guidelines: Newly installed utility services and service revisions that are necessitated by exterior alterations should be located underground.

The exterior trash and storage areas, service yards, loading areas, transformers, and air conditioning units must be screened by architecturally compatible means and materials.

Window and primary facade attachment of the equipment or firescape should not be permitted. Roof installed equipments must be screened from public view if visible from the street.



All utility equipments shall be screened from public view

Streetscape

Objective: The streetscape should be uniform and support existing facilities to provide continuity throughout the District. Spectacular effects shall be reserved for special locations such as plazas only.

Guidelines: For new developments, streetscapes should support the overall streetscaping plan and theme for the District.

When making improvements to private property, including the addition of benches, trash receptacles, fencing, bike racks, or trash enclosures, owners should match the approved District's styles for these elements.

Development of plaza's and outdoor exhibit areas should be encouraged in mid-block areas and corner plazas.



Streetscapes should support the approved theme of the district.



Amenities should match the district's approved style.

Public Art

Objective: The visual appearance of the District should be enhanced by the introduction of a variety of public art and creation of exhibit areas in different parts of the District.

Guidelines: All major public improvements in the District should utilize an integrated approach to urban design by incorporating public art in all aspects of development.

Public art should be encouraged on front yards and other locations where they are visually accessible to the public and visible from Kennedy Avenue or Highway Avenue.

Corner plazas and mid-block plazas should be encouraged along Kennedy Avenue. A variety of art objects and seating areas should be encouraged in these areas.

Public art on the corner plazas should follow a set of design guidelines consistent with the overall theme for the redevelopment.



Examples of approved public art

Landscaping

Objective: Landscaping improvement should be used to enhance the pedestrian experience, complement architectural features, and screen utility areas.

Guidelines: Landscape treatment shall be provided in a manner so as to enhance architectural features, strengthen vistas and important axes, and provide shade.

The use of flower boxes, planters and hanging flower baskets should be encouraged.

Planting of appropriate trees and shrubs should be incorporated into the overall design of developments, including parkways and parking lots. The Redevelopment Commission will provide a list of suitable trees and shrubs, along with the recommended spacing and grouping of trees.

Grades of walk, parking spaces, terraces, plazas and other paved areas shall provide an inviting and stable appearance for walking and sitting, if seating is provided.



New landscaping should enhance the district.



Flower boxes & planters are encouraged.

Parking

Objective: Parking in the District should adequately serve the users without detracting from the compact design proposed for the area.

Guidelines: Off-street parking must be located in the rear of buildings.

Parking lots should be kept small and close to the businesses served. Larger parking lots should have visual breaks and screening. Use of decorative elements, building wall extensions, plantings, berms, or other innovative means to screen parking areas from view from public ways should be incorporated in the design.

All parking areas shall include concrete curbing along pavement edges and landscaped with appropriate shade trees. Parking entrances on Kennedy Avenue should be limited in number, and width should not exceed 20 feet.



Off-street parking lots should be small, and be located in the rear of buildings.



Larger parking lots should be broken up with landscaping and other decorative elements.

